

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Feedback Form for Commission Meeting

GOVERNOR'S HISPANIC COMMISSION SUBCOMMITTE-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MEETING MINUTES JULY 10, 2012 DELAWARE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

PRESENT:

Sonia Aguilar, DEDO Ed Simon, DEDO Rob Heflin, Perdue Bobbie Schmittinger, YWCA Dinette Rivera, Rivera Business Dev. Javier Torrijos, Del DOT Dr. Jorge Ribas, Mid Atlantic Hispanic C of C Audrey Scott Hynson, DSU Pete Teague, DE OMB, GSS William Pickrum, DE OMB, GSS Michelle Harris, DE OMB, GSS Veronica Richardson, DEDO Ken Anderson, DEDO (via phone) Bob O'Brien, SCORE (via phone) Wanda Lopez, United Way (via phone) Sarah Hutton, L.A.C.C (via phone)

The meeting began with introductions. Minutes of the June 19, 2012 meeting were approved as written.

Sonia began the meeting by stating that she had received a copy of the Hispanic Yellow pages for the Philadelphia-DE area. Hopefully it can be used to identify Hispanic owned businesses and to invite them to the round table focus groups.

Ed gave review of what he found thus far regarding identifying Hispanic companies in Delaware. He stated that he contacted Dr.Ribas, president of the Mid Atlantic Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Ed reached out to several outlets to try to compose a list of Hispanic business owners. He worked with Pete and they identified those Hispanic businesses that have identified themselves as such. He will work with Ed to fine tune the information.

Sonia stated that the primary purpose of identifying these business owners is to hear from the business owners what their needs are. The group has identified several needs they feel are important but they want to have the roundtable discussions to ensure we are on the right track. Some of proposed topics are: general community needs, business start up, business expansion, commercial lending, community outreach and networking, business educational needs, job searches and marketable skills. Because the Counties are very different we plan on holding roundtable focus groups in each county. William suggested access to capital as opposed to lending. Discussion began on identifying various sources for obtaining a list of Hispanic business owners. Pete stated that the SBA website might be helpful in identifying groups; there are over 3,800 small businesses in Delaware and this list can be filtered. Michelle will send Ed the link to the site. The information can also be filtered by NAICS codes. Pete stated that New Castle County has a procurement system that he believes is able to filter by ethnic group. He will forward that contact to Ed. There is someone in Dover that does the same. The procurement and technical assistance center at Delaware Technical and Community College (DTCC) has similar capabilities. They also provide information on how to do business with the Federal government.

Dr. Ribas joined the meeting. He spoke about the role of the Mid Atlantic Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. He stated that it is very difficult and costly to start a Chamber of Commerce. He spoke about efforts to organize and start a Delaware chapter. Two unsuccessful attempts have been made. He stated that the businesses owners need to take a leadership role to make the chamber successful.

Sonia stated that we first need to identify Delaware's Hispanic business owners. The group needs to make sure we get the information needed to move forward so we can be successful. She stated that DEDO's marketing team will assist with an online and printed invitation to the business owners. The goal is to have focus groups at DTCC locations in each county. A formal invite will be sent and Sonia suggested reaching out to those we know personally and extending a personal invite sharing why it is important to attend the focus groups. The goal is to reach out to a very diverse group that encompasses many business types as well as businesses that are in various stages of development. Sonia stated that community leaders will be the facilitators of the round table meetings.

Sonia reviewed the purpose of having the round table meetings in each county. It is to gather information that can be used to establish a Hispanic educational program for business development and to make the Hispanic community aware of resources that are available in the community.

There was much discussion on how to engage the Hispanic community and how to get them to participate in these round table meetings. The committee agreed that they have to make connections with faith based community leaders. Dinette volunteered to meet with some of the religious leaders to explain the mission of the group and hopefully they will help bring in the other leaders. Audrey suggested contacting Maria Mendoza at the Department of Education as well.

Dr. Ribas stated that the Chamber is going to focus on viable businesses. The plan is to develop a critical mass of successful businesses in Delaware. A critical mass of business owners is needed so other businesses will look up to them. He also stated that to reach the Hispanic community, information needs to be transmitted via mobile platform.

There was much discussion around whether communications needs to be in English or Spanish. Dinette stated that she has found in her research that Hispanics seem to appreciate that the culture is acknowledged. Her research has found that business leaders need to know English. They found that by teaching in Spanish they could understand better, but with the understanding that they needed English to work with various business partners. She recommended being careful of what gets translated.

Sonia reiterated that one of the primary areas of focus of this subcommittee is economic development and the goal is to help the Hispanic population develop businesses which in turn will help employment. To do that we need to move towards developing relationships and Sonia stated that it looks like the best avenue to accomplish that is enlisting the support of the faith based community leaders. She would like to do that by going out and visiting with these leaders.

Sonia stated that she is asking for three AmeriCorp VISTAS to help develop relationships within the communities. They will reach out into the community and work on behalf of this committee with general community and business leaders.

Sonia suggested having two focus groups; one that would focus on established businesses and the other group for those that are just considering starting a business. The group agreed that this would be a good approach as the needs for the two groups are very different

Dinette spoke about the opportunity to meet with the Hispanic community leaders at the upcoming Latino Leadership Conference. She will provide the group with that date as soon as it is available.

Sonia stated that Eli Ramos was going to ask the commission to participate in the upcoming Hispanic Festival in Millsboro. As soon as a firm date is known we will advise the group.

Sonia distributed a list of potential questions for the Hispanic business owners. She asks that the group look at the questions and there will be further discussion at future meetings.

Bob O'Brien of SCORE reviewed The Simple Steps for Growing Your business flyer. He asked the group for the best way to get this information to the Hispanic community. Sonia suggested contacting the Hispanic newspapers to place an advertisement. Pete suggested contacting the Hispanic Media publisher of the Hispanic Yellow Pages to get a list of businesses. Sonia will share it with the Hispanic commission as well.

Sonia recommends a visit to the Latin American Community Center for those unfamiliar with the center. Sarah welcomed the opportunity and encouraged the committee to call to set-up a tour of the facility to learn about the services they offer.

Action Items:

Sonia asked the group to touch base with her with their availability to meet with the
faith based community leaders.